



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
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MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
September 10, 2014

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Mr. Al Cocce, AIA, representing John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Ms. Morgan Devlin
Mr. Mohamad Farzan, AIA
Ms. Caitlin Greeley, Statewide Planning, representing Kevin Flynn
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Mr. Clark Schoettle
Mr. Jonathan Stevens, State Historic Preservation Officer
Ms. Ruth Taylor

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Joanna Doherty, Senior Architectural Historian
Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Dr. Timothy Ives, Principal Archaeologist
Ms. Michaela Jergensen, RIDOT Reviewer
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, National Register Assistant - Heritage Aide
Mr. Jeff Rosenberg, Senior Grants Coordinator
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Mr. Marcel Valois, Executive Director EDC

GUESTS

Kaity Ryan, Preservation Society of Newport County
Chris Fagan and Spencer McCombe, Standard Paper Box Co.
Edward Connors, National Register consultant
Kathryn Cavanaugh, National Register consultant

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M., Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of June 11, 2014

On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Minutes of June 11, 2014.

3. Executive Director's Report: Edward F. Sanderson

a) Mr. Sanderson introduced Ruth Taylor who was recently appointed as a Commissioner. Ms. Taylor is the Executive Director of the Newport Historical Society. She previously served as Executive Director of the International Yacht Restoration School in Newport. Ms. Taylor is an anthropologist and historian who worked at the National Museum of the American Indian.

b) RIHPHC Principal Architectural Historian Mack Woodward has announced his retirement as of September 27, 2014. The Commissioners unanimously

VOTED

WHEREAS, William McKenzie (Mack) Woodward is retiring from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission after 38 years of outstanding service; and

WHEREAS, as Principal Architectural Historian, Mack is the author of many publications on Rhode Island's architectural heritage, including: Smith Hill, Providence; Downtown Providence; Providence City-Wide Survey; Block Island; Little Compton; Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island; Statehouses of Rhode Island; and also the American Institute of Architects Guide to Providence Architecture; as well as other publications; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Mack won the Antoinette Downing Award of the national Society of Architectural Historians for his Providence work; and

WHEREAS, National Register nominations written by Mack cover more than 2,500 historic properties or over 2,000 acres of history, including Downtown Providence and other Providence neighborhoods, Swan Point Cemetery, Newport's Ocean Drive and the Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road Historic District, and recently Little Compton's West Main Road and Adamsville; and

WHEREAS, Mack has been a key participant in the Commission's deliberations on the significance of thousands of Rhode Island properties;

NOW THEREFORE, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission congratulates Mack on his very well-deserved retirement, recognizes his career of extraordinary achievement and awesome knowledge of Rhode Island's architectural heritage, and conveys heartfelt best wishes for a happy retirement that will surely include further research, writing, lecturing, teaching, tour-guiding, advocating, and advising historic preservation projects in addition to painting, cooking, and traveling.

c) The 2014 Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation will be presented by RIHPHC and Preserve Rhode Island on September 28.

d) At The Breakers, rehabilitation of the historic underground boiler room is proceeding with ongoing review by RIHPHC staff. Recently the National Park Service was asked by members of the Bellevue Ochre Point Neighborhood Association to amend the National Historic Landmark nomination for The Breakers to identify the Gatehouse - Caretaker's Cottage as contributing the significance of the property. NPS has decided to consider whether additional information about the innovative mechanical systems should also be added to the NHL nomination and whether the information in the recent cultural landscape report should be added to the NHL nomination. When an amendment to the NHL nomination is completed, NPS will notify the owner, The Preservation Society of Newport County, and the RIHPHC in addition to interested parties and the public.

e) A news article from The Narragansett Times describing RIHPHC's July 7 press conference at The Towers announcing Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Grants was distributed. The press conference was attended by the four members of the Congressional Delegation, Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, and Narragansett Town Planner Michael DeLuca.

The grant for Temple Beth El in Providence has been terminated. The property has been purchased by a private owner who intends to restore the building for community use.

f) An updated list of State Historic Preservation Tax Credit projects was distributed.

g) The RIHPHC's 37th annual Rhode Island Heritage Day Festival will be held on Saturday September 20, 2014 at Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence.

h) Mr. Sanderson reported on recommended criteria for the 2015 Certified Local Government grants. On a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Farzan, the Commission unanimously

VOTED 2015 CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Funding Priorities and Selection Criteria

ELIGIBLE CLG PROJECTS

Applications may be submitted for projects which provide for the identification and evaluation, planning and protection, and public awareness of properties and sites listed in or considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible properties include individual sites and buildings, historic districts and buildings which are considered contributing elements of a historic district.

FY 2015 FUNDING PRIORITIES

The RIHPHC will receive applications for CLG grants in the subject areas listed below. The RIHPHC will evaluate all applications received and will give special attention to those which address important preservation needs within the applicant community or to a statewide preservation need. The State Historic Preservation Plan adopted by the RIHPHC and the historic preservation element in local community comprehensive plans will provide the context for evaluating project applications. Special consideration will be given to those projects which address the needs of an endangered property or properties which have extraordinary significance.

Statewide Projects

1. annual statewide historic preservation conference
2. training sessions for members of local historic district commissions
3. other activities which address a statewide preservation need

Identification/evaluation of Historic Resources

1. surveys, especially of resources not yet evaluated, such as underwater wrecks, or whose documentation does not meet current standards
2. preparation of National Register nominations
3. data management such as creating or updating databases or GIS systems

Planning Activities

1. preparation of the preservation component of a community comprehensive plan
2. any preservation activity identified in a community's comprehensive plan as necessary
3. preparation of ordinance drafts, rules, etc.

Public Education Activities

1. documents in print and electronic media related to the operation of historic district zoning,

such as brochures, standards, guidelines

2. other print or electronic documents, such as walking tours, surveys, etc.
3. signage, such as wayfinding signs for historic districts, plaques, etc.
4. curriculum development, docent training, etc. for historic properties and places

Resource-specific Activities

1. architectural and engineering plans and specifications
2. engineering reports
2. feasibility studies
3. historic structures reports and cultural landscapes reports

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The RIHPHC will score and rank grant applications and award grants based on the above funding priorities and project selection criteria as follows:

National Register Significance: This criterion rates relative architectural and historical significance of properties affected by the project activity. Projects involving properties which are eligible or recommended for listing on the National Register receive priority. Rare, unique, or key landmarks merit special consideration.

Project Need: This criterion rates the need and importance of the proposed project. Projects are encouraged which are an appropriate step in the development of the particular local historic preservation program. Projects involving issues identified in the Commission's comprehensive planning process, projects addressing historical resources with special needs, and projects which further local planning efforts are preferred.

Project Impact: This criterion rates the extent to which the public may directly benefit from the project. Projects with broader or statewide impact rank higher than those with local impact. Applications for seed money which can lead to a larger or multi-phase project may have greater impact than a more limited project.

Other factors considered include geographic distribution of grants awarded throughout the state; priority consideration to cities and towns which have approved affordable housing plans; administrative capacity to successfully carry out a grant project, including previous experience in managing grants; and projects which match federal grant funds with cash matching share are encouraged.

Ability to meet general program requirements is also considered including compliance with applicable federal regulations, and presenting a scope of work which can be accomplished within the allotted time framework.

4. Report: State Historic Preservation Officer's Report: Jonathan Stevens

a) Mr. Stevens reported he will meet with the I-195 Redevelopment Commission staff later today (September 10) to view information about a development proposal for Parcel 28. The RI SHPO is authorized to review and approve redevelopment proposals for surplus I-195 land under the terms of a memorandum of agreement with the Federal Highway Administration, federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, RIDOT, and the City of Providence. This authority was restated at the meeting earlier this year attended by Governor Chafee, representatives of the I-195 Commission, and the parties to the MOA. Governor Chafee has arranged for Mohamad Farzan to provide professional architectural review assistance to the process.

b) Mr. Stevens has arranged for GIS specialist Tim Saniford in the Governor's Office to assist RIHPHC and RIDOT efforts to establish a cultural resource information system.

c) Mr. Stevens is preparing planning guidance for highway beautification projects in Rhode Island. The Guide will deal with limited access roads, visual corridor protections, and beautification initiatives. The Governor plans to issue an executive order establishing a Highway Beautification Advisory Council.

5. Loan Report

Mr. Schoettle reported on a loan application for \$250,000 to rehabilitate a 4-unit historic mill worker house in Ashton Mill Village Historic District.

The building is a two and one-half story 1860s mill worker house located at the north end of the district near the Ashton Mill and the Blackstone Bike path bridge. The Ashton Historic District is a key component in the proposed Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. A National Park Service in-depth study found that Ashton and other Blackstone Valley sites are suitable to be a national historical park focused on the theme of industrialization, and Senator Jack Reed has introduced pending legislation to create the Park. If/when the Park is established, 4 – 6 Front Street may be acquired by the National Park Service for use as a Visitor Center and interpreted historic site (aka Lower East Side Tennant Museum in NYC).

Valley Affordable Housing (the loan applicant) owns 10 Ashton Village houses. Valley Affordable plans to renovate 9 houses using federal housing HOME funds, federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and federal and RI State Historic Preservation Tax Credits. The LIHTC and HOME Funding requires a 40-year restriction for affordable housing.

The goal of this loan application is to rehabilitate 4 – 6 Front Street without using the LIHTC and therefore avoid the 40-year housing restriction that would prohibit development as a NPS visitor center, assuming the National Park is established. Rehabilitation of 4 – 6 Front Street will be financed using federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, RI State Historic Preservation Tax

Credits, Valley Affordable funds, and the RIHPHC loan. The proposed rehabilitation work will repair the building to include four rental apartments. The estimated project budget is \$385,000.

An appraisal of the building in existing condition is \$250,000; the appraised value of the after-rehab condition value is \$410,000. The appraisal estimates net operating income after rehab of the four units at \$30,643.

An existing mortgage to the Town of Cumberland Housing Authority is \$100,000. Valley Affordable requests that RIHPHC take a second mortgage and all loan funds will be used for rehabilitation as well as additional funds from Valley Affordable Housing. The requested loan terms would be 3% for five years interest only with a final balloon payment of principal. A 20-year historic preservation easement would be placed on the property.

Mr. Schoettle reported that the Loan Committee had reviewed the application and recommended approval of the loan. Given the purpose of the loan is to rehabilitate the historic mill tenement and made it potentially available to the proposed national park for visitor information and interpretation, the Loan Committee recommends increasing the amount of the loan to \$350,000 in order to pay off the Town of Cumberland mortgage. This would allow RIHPHC's loan to be secured by a first mortgage (rather than a second mortgage) and would remove any potential housing restriction. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Schoettle, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the loan to Valley Affordable Housing on the terms described by Mr. Schoettle.

6. National Register of Historic Places

Final Approval: Reed Estate, 4157 Post Road, Warwick – also known as Cedar Hill and Clouds Hill Farm

National Register consultant Kathryn Cavanaugh presented information about the property.

Established as a country estate in the then-rural Cowesett section of Warwick and built between 1871 and 1877, “Cedar Hill” (the Mrs. Elizabeth I.S. Reed Estate), illustrates a national trend toward suburban living that accelerated throughout the 19th century, when manufacturing was the driving engine of the American economy. This trend was initiated by the well-to-do, whose businesses were typically in the city, and for whom a country estate was not only a peaceful retreat but a symbol of prosperity and status. Warwick, which by the end of the 19th century was a suburb of metropolitan Providence, saw at least eighteen country estates built by successful Providence-based industrialists and other elites between 1850 and 1911. Cedar Hill belonged to Elizabeth Ives Slater Reed, the daughter of one prominent manufacturer and the wife of another.

Designed by the esteemed Providence architect William R. Walker, the remarkably intact Late Gothic Revival style granite mansion with opulent High Victorian interior is a rare example of both its type and style in Rhode Island, and the only known survivor of Walker's residential designs for wealthy industrialists in the post-Civil War era. Cedar Hill is also the only historic country estate in Warwick that is still in its original use (while also serving as a historic house museum), and still holds a land area consistent with its original acreage. The period of significance extends from 1871, when construction began on the house, to ca. 1930, when the last contributing structure on the estate was built. The property retains substantial integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and has statewide historic and architectural significance. It meets Criteria A and C for listing on the National Register in the areas of community planning and development, architecture and art.

Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED approval for the nomination.

Final Approval: Taft Estate Historic District Boundary Amendment: Stillhouse Cove, Cranston

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property.

Waterfront open space has been an important visual characteristic of the Taft Estate since 1860, when Orray Taft purchased the 35-acre Brattle Farm in Edgewood as his rural retreat, and built his country home on the bluffs overlooking Stillhouse Cove. When the estate was platted for residential development in 1904, the house lots were all laid out on the west side of Narragansett Boulevard, leaving the cove lands to the east as natural open space, in keeping with the garden suburb precept of utilizing topographic features to provide scenic views. This not only enhanced the plat's marketability and rapid pace of development, but also set the stage for the Stillhouse Cove Reservation to be incorporated into the State of Rhode Island's metropolitan park system in 1915, highlighting its significance both to the plat and the larger Edgewood neighborhood. The portion of the Stillhouse Cove Reservation that was included in the original plat meets Criterion A for National Register listing for its associations with community planning, and still maintains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, and association. It contributes to the overall significance of the historic district at the local level.

During discussion, Mr. Stevens noted the important role of the Edgewood Neighborhood Association in caring for Stillhouse Cove parkland. On a motion by Mr. Farzan, seconded by Dr. Malone, the Commission unanimously

VOTED approval for the nomination amendment.

Final Approval: Standard Paper Box Co., 110 Kenyon Street, Pawtucket

National Register consultant Edward Connors presented information about the property.

The Standard Paper Box Corporation plant is significant on the state level under National Register **Criterion A** as an example of how the prominent regional jewelry industry stimulated and supported a diverse network of medium- and small-scale manufacturers that provided essential services to the jewelry manufacturers concentrated in the Providence-Pawtucket-Attleboro area from the mid-19th century through the mid-20th century. The history of the Standard Paper Box Corporation/Douglas Young Company (1914-1970) illustrates how the local paperboard industry developed and refined specialized paper box production in direct response to the mailing, shipping, packaging and display needs of the region's manufacturing jewelers.

The buildings of Standard Paper Box Corporation are also significant under **Criterion C** as an example of a modest-scale industrial plant that preserves the architectural and structural character of the original 1914-15 design, along with a succession of later additions that illustrate the adoption of newer structural materials while retaining the original design character of brick construction with segmental arch windows. Building 1 of this plant (1914) is also notable for surviving in-situ artifacts of an early electrical power system that bridged the 19th-century system of mechanical power transmission from a prime mover and the 20th century system of direct electric drive.

During discussion, Commissioner Malone emphasized the historical significance of the growth of subsidiary industries that supported jewelry manufacturing in the Providence – Pawtucket – Attleboro area. Dr. Malone also noted that the Standard Box factory shows a concern for its architectural appearance, and the factory infrastructure demonstrates the transition from steam power to electric power as electric motors were attached to the power transmission system of line shafts originally driven by steam power. Mr. Abbott said he felt the nomination did a very good job of placing the history of the Standard Box factory into a broader historical context of regional paper box manufacturing. On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Dr. Malone, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Preliminary Consideration: Providence Brewing Company, 431 Harris Avenue,
Providence

National Register consultant Edward Connors presented information about the property.

This was the second presentation to the State Review Board on the former Providence Brewing Company building as a potential candidate for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This presentation was designed to address the Review Board's earlier questions about the building's interior historic features and its historical significance in a larger context.

In his presentation, Mr. Connors provided new information on the brewery's designer, Otto Wagner, a brewery architect with a national reputation. Wagner introduced the "gravitation brewery" which used a vertical manufacturing process. Warner is credited with the design of fifty breweries nationwide, and only four are known to survive. Mr. Connors also gave a detailed review of the building's interior layout and how that and its associated structural materials represent important aspects of the brewery's design and operation.

In the first presentation to the Commission on January 8, 2014 Mr. Connors explained that the Providence Brewing Company was built in 1891-2 and significantly improved in 1910. It was one of seven large breweries in the metropolitan Providence area, and it is the only survivor. It was an "industrial brewery" that incorporated newly-introduced refrigeration technology and brewing practices based on modern, scientific principles. By 1900, the Providence Brewing Company employed about 100 operatives and was producing 200,000 barrels (6.2 million gallons) a year of their "Bohemian Lager" as well as Canada Malt and porter. The company also manufactured "hygienic ice" as opposed to the natural ice drawn from increasingly polluted urban ponds.

The Providence Brewing Company complex comprises a three-story brick brewery building on a raised basement and a separate boiler house to which are attached three single-story utilitarian buildings. The main building comprises approximately ten large chambers designed to house different brewing and ice-making operations. The basement, first and second floor chambers have steel columns supporting jack arch/concrete floors. The third (uppermost) floor is slow-burning plank with timber columns supporting the roof. No brewery equipment survives.

The original design comprised a corner tower (housing the office) with a Beaux-Arts roof; elaborate corbelling; massive round-arch windows; and two quarry-faced granite belt courses. In 1910 major improvements were carried out, including construction of the similarly-ornamented boiler house and a large, surviving, two-story ice plant attached to the north wall. Division of interior space appears to be essentially original.

After the brewery closed in 1925 the plant was used for industrial and records storage. Significant alterations include the removal of the ornate roof over the corner tower, bricking-in of the huge, round-arch, first-floor windows, and removal of a low brick parapet along the roofline.

The property is potentially significant for its architecture and as an element in the pattern of development in Providence around the turn of the nineteenth century. During the January 8 presentation Commissioners requested additional information about how the property is an example of characteristic "brewery architecture," and whether alterations that have occurred to the building affected its National Register integrity? In light of the additional information provided in the September 10 presentation, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Abbott, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for a National Register nomination.

7. Next regular meeting date: Wednesday October 8, 2014 at 9:30 AM.
8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Minutes recorded by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward F. Sanderson".

Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer